

From: NOAA - Fisheries Service <editor.fishnews@noaa.gov>

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Subject: FishNews - June 5, 2013 - New Podcast on Pollock, Oyster Restoration, Emergency Fisheries Closures, Status Review of Sawfishes, and More

Date: Wed, Jun 5, 2013 3:28 pm



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June 5, 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

June 6

Free **Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop** in Panama City, Florida.

June 11-12

Public meetings of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council in Stuart, Florida.

June 12

Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop in Gulfport, Mississippi. Both are free.

June 14

Open House at NOAA Western Regional Center Campus in Seattle, Washington.



New Podcast: Keeping an Eye on Pollock

Alaskan walleye pollock make up the largest fishery by weight in the United States. To collect data about pollock in the winter, when rough conditions make NOAA surveys difficult, scientists at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center work with fishermen to record the sonar data that their large boats use to locate the fish.

When Building an Oyster Reef, Location is Key

Learn how NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office's Habitat Assessment Team uses a 30-foot survey vessel in Harris Creek, a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay, to find suitable seabed on which to construct oyster reefs. Covering 377 acres, the Harris Creek Oyster Restoration Project is the largest such effort to date.

Reminder: Seals are Wildlife

Seals are cute, but not cuddly. Not only is handling seals illegal

ANNOUNCEMENTS

July 31

Proposals due for modifications to Pacific Coast Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat.

FEDERAL REGISTER ACTIONS

[Click here](#) for a list of only those actions open for public comment. Scroll search for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

For a list of all daily actions, check the Federal Register [online](#).

under federal law, it can be dangerous, as disturbed seals can bite and transmit disease. For the protection of people, pets, and seals, NOAA Fisheries recommends keeping a safe distance of at least 150 feet.

Proposed Guidance for Emergency Fisheries Closures - Please Comment

By **July 3**, submit your comments on proposed guidance on modifying fisheries closure areas and communicating information regarding those closures to the public during a public health emergency or oil spill.

Status Review of Five Sawfish Species - Please Comment

By **August 5**, submit your comments on NOAA Fisheries' comprehensive status review under the Endangered Species Act of five species of sawfishes. During the review, new scientific information revealed that three previously recognized species were in fact a single species. NOAA Fisheries determined that this single species, and four others, meet the definition of an endangered species.

Northeast

Celebrating Herring Homecoming on St. Croix River

The Passamaquoddy Tribe and federal Trustees joined with state and nongovernmental partners and Canadian officials in Baileyville, Maine, to celebrate the reopening of the Grand Falls Dam fish ladder on the St. Croix River. Herring will now be able to reach more than 50 percent of upstream lake habitat.

Proposed Regulations for Atlantic Herring - Please Comment

By **June 21**, [submit your comments](#) on NOAA Fisheries' proposed implementation of Amendment 5 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan. Proposed measures include revising permitting provisions, dealer and vessel reporting requirements, and requirements for vessel monitoring; increasing observer coverage; and addressing river herring bycatch.

Proposed Exempted Fishing Permit for Surfclams

By **June 14**, submit your comments on an application from the Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association for an exempted fishing permit to land unshucked surfclams into nonstandard surfclam cages. The Association is coordinating research testing alternatives to the industry standard surfclam cage.

Proposed Exempted Fishing Permits for Monkfish

By **June 14**, submit your comments on applications from the

[University of Massachusetts Dartmouth](#) and the [Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County](#) to conduct fishing exempt from monkfish days-at-sea possession limits. Both parties intend to conduct research projects funded by the Monkfish Research Set-Aside Program.

Southeast

Black Sea Bass Catch Limits to Increase in 2013

Following a recent scientific review of black sea bass showing that the stock has been rebuilt, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council has proposed to more than double the current annual catch limit. NOAA Fisheries is reviewing this request and expects to publish a proposed rule for comment this summer.

NOAA Wins Award for Best Restored Beach

Pelican Island, and its 540 acres of restored habitat, was named one of the Best Restored Beaches for 2013 by the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association. Pelican Island is part of a 19-mile-long string of barrier islands off the coast of Louisiana that have been restored over the past two decades to provide protection for wetlands and shellfish beds as well as inland communities. The \$43.1 million contract was the largest restoration contract ever developed by NOAA.

Environmental Impacts of Deepwater Horizon Early Restoration Plan

By **August 2**, submit your comments on the intention of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill natural resource trustees to prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. The statement will evaluate the environmental consequences of early restoration project types, including those proposed in an upcoming Phase III Draft Early Restoration Plan.

Environmental Impacts of Geological, Geophysical Activities in Gulf of Mexico

By **June 24**, or at one of seven **public scoping meetings** in June, [submit your comments](#) on a joint assessment by NOAA Fisheries and the Department of Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management of the environmental impacts of geological and geophysical surveys, exploration, and production-related activities in the Gulf of Mexico.

Northwest

The Case of the Missing Sockeye

A team of NOAA scientists is using an advanced network of radio telemetry receivers along the Salmon River in Central Idaho to detect where and why young sockeye salmon are

disappearing on their way to the ocean. The initial results have prompted new measures to boost survival of this endangered species.

Alaska

Proposed Amendment for Groundfish - Please Comment

By **August 2**, submit your comments on a proposed amendment to the Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska Fishery Management Plan. Amendment 89 would establish a protected area in Marmot Bay and require use of modified nonpelagic trawl gear when targeting flatfish in certain areas. These actions are intended to reduce Tanner crab bycatch and damage to bottom habitat.

NOAA Changes Cook Inlet Beluga Survey Schedule

NOAA Fisheries is reducing the frequency of abundance estimate surveys for endangered Cook Inlet beluga whales, switching from an annual to a biennial schedule. The reduced schedule will improve efficiency in the face of rising costs and reduced funding, and a [recent scientific analysis](#) indicated that the biennial schedule will be nearly as effective in detecting long-term population trends.

Alaskan Bathymetric "Smooth Sheet" Data Available

There is a wealth of bathymetry, feature, and substrate information available to natural resource scientists in the form of smooth sheets, which are paper maps that serve as final records of detailed, original hydrographic surveys. Scientists at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center have digitized and corrected these smooth sheets through modern technologies, resulting in two new publications and zipped data for downloading.

Summertime Tours of Ted Stevens Marine Institute

NOAA Fisheries is once again offering free daily tours of the [Ted Stevens Marine Research Institute](#), one of NOAA's leading science facilities. Located north of Juneau, Alaska, the facility is one of several NOAA labs that make up the Alaska Fisheries Science Center.

Technical Memo: Steller Sea Lion Population Status

Both the western and eastern distinct population segments of Steller sea lion show strong evidence of increased overall abundance in Alaska between 2000 and 2012. If overall (non-pup) counts for the western segment continue to increase, that population may be on a trajectory to downgrade from "endangered" to "threatened."

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